

All of the work completed in English class during the test period will count for 10 to 15 per cent of the student's term mark in Grade 9 English.

Will Students Get Their Individual Results?

The ministry will return the tests to students and their parents, showing the levels assigned to the individual student's work in relation to the provincial standards set for the test.

In addition, the ministry will publish a report on the overall achievement of students across the province. It will also provide each school board with a report on the overall achievement of students in its schools.

Is This a Standardized Test?

In some ways this test is like a standardized test. All students will take it. There are common test booklets and common procedures for administering and marking it.

There the similarities end. Unlike a traditional standardized test, the Grade 9 Reading and Writing Test is based on Ontario's curriculum. Also, the test uses a variety of methods and questions to test a wide range of skills. In short, the test aims to give a more complete view of students' reading and writing skills than a traditional standardized test would.

How Can Parents Help?

One of the best ways parents can help students develop their language skills is to encourage them to read and write at home. When parents take a part in their child's education, the child performs better and enjoys school more.

For further information, please contact the nearest regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training.

Central Ontario Region

2025 Sheppard Avenue East, Suite 3201
North York, Ontario M2J 1W4
Telephone: (416) 491-0330

Eastern Ontario Region

1580 Merivale Road, 4th Floor
Nepean, Ontario K2G 4B5
Telephone: (613) 225-9210

Midnorthern Ontario Region

199 Larch Street, 7th Floor
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 5P9
Telephone: (705) 675-4401

Northeastern Ontario Region

447 McKeown Avenue
P.O. Box 3020
North Bay, Ontario P1B 8K7
Telephone: (705) 474-7210

Northwestern Ontario Region

435 James Street South
P.O. Box 5000
Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 5G6
Telephone: (807) 475-1571

Western Ontario Region

759 Hyde Park Road
London, Ontario N6H 3S6
Telephone: (519) 472-1440

This brochure is one of a series of publications produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training to help Ontario residents understand changes to our elementary and secondary education system. The series is called About Your Schools.

A**about Your Schools...**

CA20N

DE

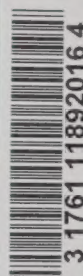
-7037

Ontario Grade 9 Reading

and Writing Test

1994-95

Information for
Parents and Students



Printed on recycled paper

94-092

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1994

ISSN 0-7778-2836-7

 **Ontario**

Ministry of Education
and Training

How well do students read and write? How well do our schools teach these basic skills? The Ontario Grade 9 Reading and Writing Test, 1994-95, is part of Ontario's commitment to answering these questions.

This is the second year that all Grade 9

A Message from the Minister

The 1994-95 Grade 9 Reading and Writing Test is an important part of Ontario's commitment to developing a testing program that will strengthen education in our province. It will help individual students, parents, and teachers see what a student needs to do to build essential skills. And it will help educators adapt education programs to meet students' needs.



Dave Cooke
Minister

students – about 150,000 – will be participating in a provincial test of reading and writing. This test will give a clear picture of student achievement in the important area of language. We'll know where students are doing well and where they need help. And then we'll know where we have to improve what we teach and how we teach it. In the end, students in all grades will benefit.

When Will Students Write the Test?

Testing for students in first-semester Grade 9 English classes will start in October 1994; for second-semester Grade 9 English classes, in late

February 1995. Students in year-long Grade 9 English classes will start writing the test in November.

How Does the Test Work?

For two to three weeks (longer in schools that do not use the semester system), each Grade 9 English class will work on a set of test materials provided by the Ministry of Education and Training.

For the reading part of the test, students will read several passages selected from literature and their everyday environment. They will answer questions about each passage. Some of the questions will be multiple-choice, others will require written answers.

The reading part of the test will measure both basic reading skills and what educators call "higher-level thinking skills". Basic skills include the ability to understand what is read and to recall information. Higher-level skills include the ability to summarize, analyse, and synthesize parts of a passage, solve problems based on information in the passage, and make critical judgements.

The Grade 9 Reading and Writing Test is a new kind of test.

Students have to answer questions and write compositions, but they have to do a lot more. They have to plan, research, and be critical and creative. They have to work on their own and with their fellow students. They have to show that they can take what they've read and explain it, write about it, and use it.

Students will also read, look at, and discuss a wide variety of materials as background to the writing part of the test. For this part, each student will complete two compositions.

In one of the compositions, students will describe their personal views and feelings about a poem. In the other, they will tell a story, or state and defend an opinion. With their teachers' help, students will also choose a third piece of writing to submit as a sample of their best Grade 9 work.

The writing part of the test will check students' basic writing skills, including grammar, spelling, and punctuation. It will also look at students' skills in organizing their writing and in writing for a particular purpose and audience.

During the test period, students will also be involved in a variety of classroom activities related to the test. Such activities may include group work, presentations, and other kinds of writing.

Why Test Grade 9 Reading and Writing?

Students' achievement in Grade 9 says a lot about how they'll do throughout the rest of their high school program. Since language skills are essential for all learning, many people are concerned about how well students read and write.

There are two reasons, then, for choosing to test Grade 9 reading and writing. One is to help improve the teaching and learning

of reading and writing skills at a crucial stage in students' education; the other is to respond to public concerns.

What Are the Standards for Marking Students' Work?

The standards will be based on what the ministry expects students to achieve in Grade 9. These expectations – called learning outcomes – are given in *The Common Curriculum*, Ontario's new curriculum guide for Grades 1 to 9, and the draft *Provincial Standards: Language (Grades 3, 6, and 9)*, released in March 1994.

How Will the Test Be Marked?

The Ministry of Education and Training will use the provincial standards to evaluate each student's work in order to determine the levels at which the student is reading and writing. The test will be marked for the ministry by teachers who have had special training in applying the provincial standards.

The ministry will mark the work of students who take the test in the fall of 1994 in November and December; the work of students who take the test in the winter and spring of 1995 will be marked in March and April.

The classroom teacher will mark and evaluate the work in more detail. Teachers will thus be able to offer students and their parents specific suggestions for improving students' reading and writing.